

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**  
**Full Commission Board Meeting**  
**June 1, 2007**  
**Omaha State Office Building, 1313 Farnam on the Mall, Room 227**  
**Omaha, NE**  
**9:00 a.m.**

**Chairperson Mr. Daniel Darnall called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.**

**A. Roll Call**

Members present were Ms. Mary Ann Burke, Mr. Clifford Carlson, Mr. Daniel Darnall, Mr. James DeVaney, Ms. Luana Duennerman, Ms. Maureen Larsen, Mr. Raymond Meester, Dr. David Rutledge, Dr. Kenya Taylor and Ms. Barbara Woodhead. Staff attending was Ms. Tanya Wendel, Executive Director and Ms. Lori Burrage, Business Manager. Interpreters were Dr. Hugh Prickett and Ms. Suzie Pauley.

**B. Acceptance of the Agenda**

Mr. Darnall asked for changes or additions to the agenda. Ms. Wendel asked to add E.2.e., NETV Program. **Mr. DeVaney made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Dr. Taylor seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, yes; Mr. DeVaney, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Larsen, yes; Mr. Meester, yes; Dr Rutledge, yes; Dr. Taylor, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**C. Acceptance of the Minutes – 12/1/2006**

Mr. Darnall asked for changes or additions to the minutes. **Ms. Duennerman made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Mr. DeVaney seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, yes; Mr. DeVaney, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Larsen, abstain; Mr. Meester, abstain; Dr. Rutledge, abstain; Dr. Taylor, yes; Ms. Woodhead, yes. Motion passed with six votes in favor and three abstentions.**

**Audience Comments**

Ms. Tami Richardson-Nelson addressed the Board regarding the FCC announcement extending access requirements to VP services and issues connected with the NCDHH interpreter referral service. Hospitals in Omaha are not getting interpreters and the parties requesting an interpreter are not getting called back by NCDHH staff. Ms. Richardson-Nelson stated while they are looking forward to the having the Deaf Expo in Nebraska, the Deaf community does not want it in April due to the weather. At least 50 deaf people have been contacted and all want it held in May or June.

Mr. Art Nelson addressed the Board regarding the Deaf Expo. He was on the committee but has withdrawn as he didn't feel comfortable as it began to appear the Expo is for hearing people. Mr. Nelson feels it should be held in the fall.

Ms. Shirley Meyer, Ms. Patti Reitz and Ms. Marlene Wagner introduced themselves but did not address the Board.

#### **D. Chairperson's Report – Mr. Darnall**

##### **1. Introduction of new Commissioners**

The new Board members introduced themselves. Mr. Carlson is hard of hearing, has a deaf son and is from Lincoln. Dr. David Rutledge is a deaf, has a cochlear implant and is a retired principal from Lincoln. Ms. Maureen Larsen is an interpreter from Gretna. Mr. Raymond Meester is a CODA (Child of Deaf Adults) and is a minister from Lincoln; this is his second time on the board.

##### **2. Director's Review**

**Ms. Duennerman made a motion to close the meeting to discuss the Executive Director's annual performance evaluation. Dr. Taylor seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, yes; Mr. DeVaney, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Larsen, yes; Mr. Meester, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes; Dr. Taylor, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion. The meeting was closed at 9:40 a.m.**

**Mr. DeVaney made a motion to reopen the meeting at 11:10 a.m. Dr. Taylor seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, yes; Mr. DeVaney, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Larsen, yes; Mr. Meester, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes; Dr. Taylor, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**Results of the closed meeting. Mr. DeVaney made a motion to grant a 2.5% salary increase for Ms. Wendel. Mr. Carlson seconded the motion. Mr. Carlson made a motion to amend the motion to include the Commissioners will have the option to consider an additional increase if additional money is available. Ms. Larsen seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, yes; Mr. DeVaney, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Larsen, yes; Mr. Meester, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes; Dr. Taylor, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

##### **3. Letter to Chairperson**

Mr. Darnall asked for questions connected with the letter from Interprettek. Ms. Wendel has responded to the letter. Ms. Woodhead explained this decision was after the Commission changed their policy of contacting other referral businesses. Ms. Wendel stated there may be some confusion within the Deaf community since the private referral company contacts some of the same interpreters that we do. The annual agreement interpreters sign with the Commission states they are independent but then they were accepting jobs as Interprettek employees. There was also confusion with some interpreters thinking that they were being removed from the Commission's list because they worked for other businesses. Ms. Wendel attended an interpreter meeting to clarify the policy. Ms. Duennerman stated the NCDHH referral service works well for her employer. Mr. Meester supports the service and shared some of his experiences with getting an interpreter for a family member. Ms. Woodhead asked if Ms. Wendel has met with the new Interprettek referral coordinator, Ms. Lorelei Waldron. Ms. Wendel responded yes. The current process is if the Commission cannot fill an assignment, we contact the requesting party indicating we are unable to fill the request. If they ask what

to do, we will provide the name of the other referral company. The requesting party is then responsible for contacting them directly. Mr. Meester asked if the referral company in Lincoln is also being referred. Ms. Wendel responded no, the Commission must be assured of an interpreter's qualifications. She knows the qualifications of the Interpreterk interpreters and is comfortable they are qualified.

Mr. Darnall recognized Ms. Woodhead and thanked her for her service on the Board.

**Mr. Carlson made a motion to amend the previously amended agenda to include the election of officers. Dr. Rutledge seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, yes; Mr. DeVaney, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Larsen, yes; Mr. Meester, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes; Dr. Taylor, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

Mr. Darnall asked for nominations for Chairperson. Dr. Taylor was nominated and elected by group consensus. Mr. Darnall asked for nominations for Vice Chairperson. Mr. DeVaney was nominated and elected by group consensus. Mr. Darnall asked for nominations for Secretary. Ms. Duennerman was nominated and elected by group consensus.

## **E. Executive Director's Report**

### **1. Staff Update**

#### **a. Public Information Officer**

Ms. Wendel reported that Mr. Alan Kosse resigned effective May 18, 2007. The position was advertised and 67 applications were received. Interviews were held yesterday and another group is scheduled for Monday, June 4<sup>th</sup>. The position could be housed in either Lincoln or Omaha.

### **2. Program Updates**

#### **a. Activity Reports**

#### **b. Grant**

##### **1. Get Alarmed**

Ms. Wendel asked the Omaha staff to report on their activities. Ms. Janet Killam reported the Deaf Senior Citizen group is very excited about the Deaf Expo and she has had many offers from the community to help. She will be attending some county fairs this summer and travels to Norfolk every second Monday of the month. She also reported on the new project, Get Alarmed, which is funded by a grant from the Enrichment Foundation to provide free fire alarms to hard of hearing and deaf individuals. The Nebraska Equipment Distribution Program (NEDP) had a name change to Nebraska Specialized Telecommunication Equipment Program (NSTEP); those requests continue to increase. The number of individuals taking QAST has increased dramatically with the recent IWCC and Metro interpreter program graduates.

Ms. Beth Ellsworth reported she is finding younger people are needing assistance due to noise exposure and are either getting hearing aids or cochlear implants. Ms. Ellsworth works extensively with elderly citizens and travels to Fremont and Columbus monthly.

#### **c. Mentoring Interpreters Across Nebraska**

- i. Quarterly Report**
  - ii. Summer Intensive Training**

Ms. Rayni Kaika reported on the Mentoring Program which is funded by a grant from the Department of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation. The Summer Intensive Training is scheduled for June 24 – 29, 2007 in Omaha.

- d. Mental Health Minutes**

- i. Last Hope Recovery Center**

Ms. Wendel reported the Last Hope Recovery Center is a new mental health facility being set up in Omaha and is licensed under Alegent Bergan Mercy. The Mental Health Advisory Committee met with Mr. Steve Spelic and he expressed a willingness to accommodate deaf and hard of hearing patients. The Advisory committee is working on a proposal/recommendations on meeting the needs of deaf and hard of hearing people for Mr. Spelic.

- e. NETV Program**

Ms. Wendel asked for assistance promoting the NETV program on hearing loss that will be aired on June 26<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Dr. Taylor has been very active with noise awareness and will be one of the panelists. Students from UNL, Barkley Center will man the phones, NETV will be advertising this month in newspapers and on the radio.

Ms. Wendel has been working with Cabela's on conducting an awareness program throughout the state but they have restrictions on presenters, only allowing Game and Parks to conduct the presentations. At this time Game and Parks is not willing to participate. Ms. Wendel is working with Game and Parks on hearing loss awareness programs for the hunter education program and youth camps they offer. The new Hunting and Hearing Safety brochure was distributed. Game and Parks has requested 10,000 copies of the brochure to distribute throughout their state facilities. Ms. Woodhead asked if there is a brochure targeting adolescents and the use of I Pods. Ms. Wendel stated there is a brochure connected with Agriculture for the FFA groups but not for I Pods. Mr. Carlson stated I Pods and MP3 players can be set so the volume is held to a certain level but not many manufacturers make that known. Ms. Wendel stated this may be a good subject for the panelists to start with during the NETV program.

- 3. Business Manager's Report**

- a. General Ledger**

Ms. Burrage reported that she and Ms. Wendel will be reviewing the budget for the end of the fiscal year. Since the Legislature just ended yesterday, no final budget numbers for the next biennium has been confirmed.

Ms. Burrage reported the State Auditors have been conducting an audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006 and they hope to have it finished next week. The Chairperson will receive a copy of the draft report. The Commission will have an opportunity to submit comments on the findings; those comments will also be submitted to the Board.

- F. Subcommittee Reports**

- 1. Goals Committee**

- a. Goal 1**

**b. Goal 2**

**c. Goal 3**

Mr. Carlson will be joining the Goals Committee.

**2. Interpreter Issues**

**a. Supreme Court Payment Policy**

**b. Web Based Referral System**

Ms. Larsen reported on new the fee schedule for the courts beginning July 1, 2007. There have been a number of problems with the LaVsta and Sarpy County Police Departments. Mr. Carlson suggested developing a new brochure for police departments on the use of interpreters.

Ms. Wendel reported the licensing regulations have been approved by the Attorney General's office and were hand delivered to the Governor's office two days ago. Ms. Wendel contacted that office and they indicated their review may take 30 days. If approved, the regulations will then be filed with the Secretary of State's office.

Ms. Wendel reported on the Web Based Interpreter Referral System which is funded by a grant from Voc Rehab. Training for interpreters and businesses will be held in July in Lincoln and Omaha. She indicated the concerns raised during the audience comments have not been brought to her attention until today, but she will follow up with staff on those concerns. The web based program should help resolve some of these concerns. Mr. Carlson asked if email access will be an issue and possibly reduce the number of available interpreters. Ms. Wendel responded a survey was sent out asking about their access, carriers, etc., and nobody on our referral list was without access. Interpreters will need to update their schedules so they don't get all the text messages if they aren't available. Ms. Larsen stated one concern is if interpreters will be checking their messages while working another assignment.

Ms. Larsen has agreed to become the Chair of the Interpreter Issues Committee, Mr. DeVaney and Ms. Burke will continue to serve on the Committee.

**3. TRS Advisory Committee**

Mr. DeVaney reported on the statute change connected with the surcharge fees. NSTEP was consistently running out of money before the end of the fiscal year and around 500 applications were on hold. With the statute change, all pending applications have been processed; the vouchers and/or equipment have been received.

**5. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Issues**

**a. Open Round Table Discussion**

Ms. Duennerman reported on the ORTD meeting held on April 7, 2007. Ms. Wendel stated there is a need for a better political action plan. Mr. Carlson suggested using the new database to identify how many deaf and hard of hearing constituents live in each senator's district. Ms. Wendel agreed, stating the staff is focusing on getting more deaf and hard of hearing individuals to register with the Commission. Ms. Wendel stated new ways need to be developed to get the registry form into the hands of deaf and hard of hearing individuals statewide. Previously tried through phone bills but Lincoln and Omaha will not allow it. Ms. Woodhead asked if this is the committee that is concerned about the Deaf Expo being held in April. Mr. Darnall responded no. Deaf Nation has their schedule set and this one date they had available. Ms. Duennerman explained the Deaf Expo committee was given two dates, the committee waited for feedback for a couple weeks before voting on a date. Ms. Wendel stated only 14 states

are given this opportunity and typically large cities are selected. Deaf Nation does all the work and brings in about 80 vendors. Additionally, the Regional Programs are willing to participate if it's in April and will do an ASL Festival. Mr. Darnall and Ms. Burke both support having the Expo in April and are excited for Deaf Nation to come as it have a great impact on the community. Ms. Duennerman stated many people in Lincoln are very supportive and excited about the project. She has been contacted by people in surrounding states that are also excited and willing to help.

## **H. New Business**

### **1. Educational Interpreters**

Ms. Wendel reported on Rule 51, stating the new standards for educational interpreters are being revised. The NDE Board will be meeting in June.

## **I. Announcements**

### **1. SEAC Advisory Committee**

Name changed from Statewide Meeting to Special Education Advisory Committee.

### **Next meeting date**

September 7, 2007 in Scottsbluff, NE

**Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.**